

# Poor Sherlock Holmes—Hopelessly Crazy?

Conan Doyle, Who Has Been Victimized by Transparent "Spirit" Frauds, Now Offers Photographic Evidence That Fairies Really Exist Just Like the Story Books



A Very Dainty Little Fairy Anybody Would Be Glad to Meet.



The Gryphon of "Alice in Wonderland."

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, the distinguished creator of the famous fiction character, the great detective, "Sherlock Holmes," made a painful impression during his recent American lecture tour, in which he recounted his experiences with various spiritualistic mediums. Conan Doyle accepted as evidence of supernatural phenomena some of the most transparent tricks which fraudulent mediums are constantly using.

But now Conan Doyle's friends are dismayed by his latest book, "The Coming of the Fairies." Here the illustrious author of "Sherlock Holmes" passes out of the realm of spooks and now asserts his full belief in the existence of gnomes and fairies.

Conan Doyle, who believes he has talked with dozens of spirits who have returned to chat with him from the world beyond the grave, sees no reason to doubt that the little elves and dainty sprites of our childhood dreams really exist. He offers photographs of them!

Solemnly and seriously, as a lawyer lays his exhibits of evidence before the court, Dr. Doyle prints in his new volume "fairies" photographs, which in his judgment prove that the lawns, the bushes and the woodlands are peopled by these little creatures, just as the artists of the fairy books have made them in their imagination.



"Frances and the Leaping Fairy."

"Photograph taken by Elsie in August, 1920. 'Cameo' camera. Distance, three feet. Time, one-fiftieth of a second. This negative and the other adjoining it have been as strictly examined as the earlier ones, and similarly disclose no trace of being other than perfectly genuine photographs."

Children who produced these fairy pictures produced "photographs of the type of Alice and the Fairies."

Will Conan Doyle's next book show us photographs of the Queen of Hearts, the Snark, and the little oysters walking on their hind legs? Mr. Doyle already believes that the mythical faun, the dryad, the naiad and the other imaginary creatures alluded to in the classics of Greece and Rome, were once truly present on earth and are not merely mental figments of imagination of the ancient writers. Along with these creatures, will Mr. Doyle also presently produce a photograph of the Gryphon of "Alice in Wonderland," and of the little men of the Black Forest, so dear to the imagination of German children?

Once accepted, Conan Doyle's belief in the existence of queer little people in the world around us, the logic of the reasoning leads to unlimited possibilities. It is reasonable enough to suppose that if there are good fairies there are also bad fairies and, of course, a witch is little else than a horrid, wicked fairy—therefore we should expect to have photographs later on of black-haired old hags riding their broom-sticks, with a black cat.

As we know from the story books that elves and fairies and sprites spend a large part of their time in play, we may hope to have photographs sooner or later, showing them at play. But how do they play? For instance, do elves play golf, and little elves carry the golf bags? Will Dr. Doyle's next book show us photographs of the good and bad little people of the hitherto invisible world, playing games which perhaps would be quite a novelty and well worth adopting in our own sad world of reality?

The distinguished author explains the disappearance to-day of many of the ancient creatures like the dryad and the naiad of classical times by making the statement that "as nations advance and grow more spiritual, these lower forms of life die out from the astral plane of earth's sphere, and succeeding generations begin at first to doubt, and then deny that they ever existed."

From Dr. Doyle's line of reasoning, it is fortunate that we have not advanced to such a condition of spiritual perfection that the dear little fairies have passed out of our range of vision. We have pro-



A Little Man of the Forest.



Perhaps There Are Rich and Poor Elves.



"Fairy Offering Poësy of Hare-Bells to Elsie."

"The fairy is standing almost still, poised on the bush leaves. The wings are shot with yellow, and upper part of dress is very pale pink."

these fairies from photographs he had seen taken by two young girls during the Summer and early Fall of the year 1917.

Elsie Wright, sixteen, and her younger cousin, Frances Griffiths, ten, played together on the banks of a little stream known as Cottingley Beck, which ran near their home, situated in a small village a few miles from Bingley, Yorkshire, where there are some of the most fascinating valleys in all England.

The girls were accustomed to taking their noonday lunch with them, and spending the best part of the half cycle of the sun romping through the narrow valley and playing by the little stream. These all-day outings were used somewhat in the nature of a health cure for Elsie, who was not very robust.

When the children came home from their daily pleasures Elsie sometimes spoke to her parents—practical middle-class people—about seeing the fairies, but they considered her statements whimsical fancies of an adolescent mind.

In the Spring of the year 1917, Mr. Arthur Wright, the father, was presented with an inexpensive camera, and thereafter spent some of his holiday time taking snapshots of the neighboring scenes.

One day the children asked him for the camera, expressing the desire of "snapping" their little fairy playmates. This request was scorned for a time, but finally Mr. Wright yielded to the pleadings of the children, inserted a single plate in the camera, adjusted the diaphragm and explained to the children how to operate the camera.

Within an hour the children returned, breathless with excitement, and begged Mr. Wright to develop the plate. While this was being done Elsie entered the darkened room, and as the chemical reaction began to take place shouted, "Oh, Frances, the fairies are on the plate." In the Fall of the year another photograph of the fairies was taken by the children.

The first picture was that of Frances, the younger girl, standing with head and bust showing over a band of five little winged fairies, gaily dancing about. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the picture is the striking likeness of these little creatures to the popular conception of fairies made familiar to every child in the simple story books that he first learned to read.

The second photograph taken shows the older girl, Elsie, seated on the ground, and extending her hand to a weird, little



"Frances and the Fairies."

"Photograph taken by Elsie. Bright sunny day in July, 1917. Distance, four feet. Time, one-fiftieth of a second. The original negative is asserted by expert photographers to bear not the slightest trace of combination work, retouching, or anything whatever to mark it as other than a perfectly straight, single-exposure photograph, taken in the open air under natural conditions. The negative is sufficiently, indeed, somewhat overexposed. The waterfall and rocks are about twenty feet behind Frances, who is standing against the bank of the beck. The coloring of the fairies is described by the girls as being of very pale pink, green, lavender and mauve, most marked in the wings and fading to almost pure white in the limbs and drapery. Each fairy has its own special color." (The above three photographs are from Conan Doyle's new book, "The Coming of the Fairies.")

gressed far enough so that we no longer can see and hear and photograph, the classical dryad and naiad, but we are still able to see and enjoy and photograph the little sprites on the lawn and in the woodlands.

Lewis Carroll, the author of "Alice in Wonderland," apparently happened to have exactly the right spiritual development to be able to see and listen to the conversation of his fantastic characters. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that Dr. Doyle will sooner or later dig up somebody who has a first-class photograph of the Snark or the Boojum.

As in the accounts of his psychic peregrinations into spirit land, Sir Conan evidently expects that the exposition of his latest mental wanderings into realms preternatural will meet with considerable scepticism. And so he attempts to allay critics.

"The series of incidents set forth," Conan Doyle says, "represent either the most elaborate or ingenious hoax ever played upon the public, or else they constitute an event in human history which may in the future appear to have been epoch making in its character."

"It is hard for the mind to grasp what the ultimate results may be if we have actually proved the existence upon the surface of this planet of a population which may be as numerous as the human race."

What mere man lacks is a proper



Sir A. Conan Doyle.

gnome with pointed hat, who is just stepping on her knee. The magnifying glass brought out with startling clearness what appeared to be pipes that he was evidently playing as he danced on the knee of his earthly sister.

From that time on the negatives have passed through various hands for scientific investigation.

Sir Oliver Lodge, who believes almost everything he hears, refused to accept them as fairy pictures, suggesting that small photographs of Californian classical dancers had been superimposed upon a British background.

If any reader of this page happens to have a photograph of a dancer exactly like those "fairy" dancers the editor would very much like to see it.

Photograph experts have also examined the plates, and while they agreed that it was evident that the picture was taken with one exposure, they thought that a man acquainted with trick photography and under proper conditions could reproduce pictures exactly like the fairy photographs.

Another expert pointed out that in the first picture the little girl, Frances, seems to have concentrated her attention more on the operation of the camera than on the little creatures dancing before her. This, says one critic, is unnatural. The child would naturally look at the fairies.

But to all of these objections Conan Doyle comes forward with an explanation. Will Conan Doyle's next book give us equally authentic photographs of the whole fascinating family of creatures from "Alice in Wonderland" and perhaps "Humpty Dumpty" and "Brer Rabbit"?